

# Case Study in Sustainable Tourism



## Low Isles Sailaway - Port Douglas

Low Isles Sailaway is located in Port Douglas and has been Advanced Ecotourism certified for nearly 12 years.

The business offers sailing and snorkelling trips to Low Isles, an unspoiled and protected coral cay island located within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and surrounded by magnificent coral gardens with 150 species of hard corals, 15 species of soft corals and a large variety of reef fish including angelfish, damselfish, anemones, giant trevallies, green turtles and many other species. We offer day trips and sunset sailing trips.

### ROLE OF CERTIFICATION

Getting certified was for us a way to be recognised as having high standards and a way to be able to promote quality experience, interpretation and service. The decision was also related to the protection of the reef and its environment and the will to be involved in keeping Australian destinations unspoiled.



We would describe the process of going through certification as comprehensive: collecting the data and providing the appropriate documents and the certification process itself was quite time-consuming but we were expecting it and we knew it would be a long process. Thanks to our Advanced Ecotourism certification, we have been able to demonstrate that our business practices are of high standards. Other benefits are the 15-year permit granted by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) to operate within the marine park, and the possibility of being internationally promoted through listings.

Achieving certification involved requirements that were already on our list of projects; it enabled us to implement these changes such as the installation of a low emission 4 stroke outboard engine, recognised for producing three times less emissions than a conventional engine.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

For three years, a donation of \$10 per passenger, already included in the ticket price, has been used to contribute to carbon offsetting. The initiative is a way for us to promote ecotourism and what we do for conservation, and the money collected is used for environmental initiatives such as Eco Shamba Tree Farm, a reforestation project that was started in 2009. The project has resulted in the planting of 9,000 trees on 27 hectares of ex-cane paddocks close to Port Douglas and adjacent to World Heritage Rainforest and boarding Creeks Creek. We have recently participated in another reforestation project involving the plantation of 4,100 cabinet timber trees.

We like to be innovative when it comes to using sustainable resources. We are using Bio-Diesel made from pongamia pinnata trees. We have also taken part in adventure workshops, representing ecotourism and trying to inspire others to spread the word too. We are involved in marketing initiatives promoting ecotourism in different European countries, such as the UK, France, Holland, Denmark and more. Thanks to our active conservation efforts, we have had the chance to participate in the making of the Great Barrier Reef series produced by the BBC.

#### Low Isles Sailaway

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